A

SERMON,

Preached at the

Church of St. *MARY*,

IN

NOTTINGHAM,

January the 4th. 169$\frac{8}{9}$.

BEING

The usual Lecture-Day, before the Mayor and Aldermen, *&c.* and the Society for Reformation of Manners.

And Publisht at their Request.

By *JOHN ELLIS*, Rector of *Gonalston*.

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THE PREFACE.

THere *has been, I fear, but too much Occaſion given for that general Complaint of the great Degeneracy and Corruption of Manners, which of late ſeems to have ſpread it ſelf thro' almoſt the whole Body of the Nation: Nor hath any thing been more paſſionately wiſh'd for, by all good Men, than ſome proper and ſeaſonable Methods (which could only be expected from the Laws) to put a Stop to the exorbitant* Growth *of the Licentiouſneſs and Debauchery, which is almoſt become the* Genius *of the Age we live in. It pleaſed Almighty* God *(who is never wanting to the Neceſſities of his Church) at the firſt Appearance of the* Chriſtian Religion *in the World, to ſupply the Want of the* Coercive Power *of the Magiſtrate*

(who was then Heathen) by an extraordinary and miraculous Assistance from Heaven. This made their Doctrine so much revered, and their Censures so much dreaded, that great Fear fell upon all the Church, *and none* durst join themselves unto them, *who were not resolved to live answerably to the Rules of the* Holy Religion, *they made a Profession of. After the withdrawing of this Power, God left it to the Support and Patronage of* Christian Princes, *whom he promised to raise up, to be* Nursing Fathers, and Nursing Mothers to His Church; *that what was wanting in the Power of the* Spiritual, *might by them be supplied with the* Temporal Sword, *which God put into their Hands for this very purpose, to be a* Terror to Evil Doers: *That they might be under him (to whom alone Vengeance belongeth)* Revengers to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.

And, if ever, certainly there is now the greatest Need of the Countenance and Assi-

Assistance of this Minister of God; *when Vice is grown so abominably Outragious and Insolent, as to scorn all the gentler Methods of Perswasion and Reproof; nay, even the keenest Weapons of our Spiritual Warfare. Hell and Damnation it self are now grown to be but Bugbear Words, fit only to frighten a few Melancholy, Bigotted Fools; not to awe the Brave, and Daring* Heroes *of our Days, who can bid Defiance to* Omnipotence *it self, and boldly Charge into the very midst of the* Devouring Flames. They laugh at Fear, and are not affrighted; *or like the* Leviathan *in* Job, *(the Spiritual)* Darts are accounted as Stubble, and they laugh at the shaking of the Spear. *And it cannot, sure, but make our Hearts Ake and Bleed (ours especially, who have taken the Charge of Souls upon us, and must give an Account to God for them) to see* Thousands fall by our Side, and Ten Thousand on our Right Hand; by that Pestilence, that not only walketh in Darkness, but wasteth at Noon-Day.

And since God, *by a very seasonable Providence, has been pleas'd to put it into the Hearts of our* Gracious Soveraign, and his Parliament, (*who alone, under God, are able to stem the Tide of overflowing Wickedness*) *to appear in the Defence of our Religion, and to furnish us with a Remedy for this growing Evil: We, methinks, of all Men,* (*whose proper Business it is, to oppose the Growth of the Kingdom of Satan, if we cannot utterly destroy it*) *should be most forward, to lay hold on all Opportunities and Advantages, which* God (*by his* Substitutes *on Earth*) *puts into our Hands, for the putting a stop to this Devouring Plague; and the doing of that Good in the World, which, by our utmost Zeal and Diligence, we are not otherwise capable of effecting. God never bestows any Power in vain: And since this Power in the Hands of the Magistrate, is* (*in some Sense*) *Equivalent to that more extraordinary one in the Hands of the Apostles; why should it not be equally culpable in us, not to embrace the Advantages that are hereby offer'd us, for the better pursuing the Ends of our Mi-*

Miniſtry, as it would have been (ſuppoſing it had pleaſed God to have continued it down to us, their Succeſſors) not to have exerciſed that Power of the Lord Jeſus *(when the Edification of the Church required it)* to deliver *(Scandalous Members)* to Satan for the Chaſtiſement of the Fleſh, that their Spirits might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus. And that others alſo might Fear, and learn not to Blaſpheme.

It was upon theſe Conſiderations, that I at firſt conſented (tho' ſomewhat unwillingly) to Preach, and now to Publiſh one of the Quarterly Sermons *on the Subject, and to the* Society for Reformation of Manners, *(in the Courſe of the* Lecture, *Licenſed here by his* Grace, *our moſt* Reverend Dioceſan*)* *unwillingly, I ſay, not out of any Shame, or for fear of Cenſure, for appearing in Favour of that, which, in the general, I believe every good Man would be aſham'd of diſcountenancing: But becauſe I could rather have wiſh'd it had been undertaken by ſome other of my* Reverend Brethren, *whoſe Reputation and Abilities might have*

recommended it to the World, with more Advantage. But I hope the meanneſs of my Performance herein, may provoke their Zeal to give all due Encouragement to a Work, which (by the Bleſſing of God upon it) will in due time, I hope, appear to have eminently conduced, to the Advancement of his Glory in the World, the Honour of our Religion, and the Reformation of a Corrupted, and Profligate Age. And none, I am ſure, can undertake a Work of this Nature, without a manifeſt Blemiſh and Reflection upon us; if we (who ſhould lay hold on all the favourable Opportunities of making the World better) ſit ſtill, and look on unconcernedly. If others do it, and we neglect it, they take our Crown *off our Heads.*

I know he ſails againſt Wind and Tide that endeavours to reform a wicked World: Let him manage himſelf as he can, he muſt expect to be ill uſed, and treated with many rude and bitter Scoffs. To labour, by Perſwaſion, to divert Men from their evil Courſes, will in Scorn be called Preaching *and* Canting: *If he boggle at others Men's Sinful Extravagancies,*

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and will not, by his own, add to the Iniquity of the Times, he must expect to be called Precise Fool: *If more strict in his Religion, he will be reproach'd as an* Hypocrite. *But it is no wonder to receive such unjust Measure from an unreasonable and wicked World. Neither* John the Baptist, *by his Rigid and Severe Austerity; nor* our Blessed Saviour, *by his Free and Obliging (tho' Innocent) Conversation, could escape the Censures of that wicked and perverse* Generation of Vipers *they lived amongst, who were always fastning their envenom'd Teeth, upon any thing (because indeed it shamed and reproach't them) that appear'd better than themselves. But his Religion, surely, hangs very loose about him, that will be rallied and flouted out of it.*

That which I have often and most wonder'd at, is the calling of it Fanaticism. *I think nothing can be a greater Reproach to our* Church, *than for any one, that professes himself a Member of it, to make or countenance such an Objection. For what greater Honour can be possibly do to the* Party *he designs hereby*

hereby to Vilifie? Or how can he more Diſcredit the Church *he pretends to Honour? What is this, but to throw Dirt into her moſt Beautiful Face; and to inſinuate her Countenancing of that which She moſt of all Abhors and Abominates? Is not the Doctrine of our Church what the* Bleſſed and Holy Jeſus *came to Plant and Propagate in the World? The principal End of whoſe coming was, to* Redeem us from all Iniquity, and to Purifie to Himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. To teach us to deny all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, and to live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent evil World. *Was not this the End of his unſpotted Example, his Sermons, and Diſcourſes, to implant all the Parts of Vertue and Holineſs in the Hearts and Lives of Men? Is it not a Principal Part of our* Pure and Undefiled Religion, to keep our ſelves unſpotted from the World? *Nay, we are commanded,* to abſtain from all Appearance of Evil. Not to keep Company, if any one that is called a Brother be

be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolator, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner. *And I am ſure our* Eſtabliſh'd Church, *in all its Conſtitution, enjoins and requires the* Strickteſt, *the moſt* Exemplary, *and* Subſtantial *(tho' unaffected) Piety and Holineſs; and preſſes it upon all its Members, as a neceſſary Condition of Salvation. And were but our Lives conformable to its* Incomparable Rules, *it would ſoon appear, what Holy Perſons it would make us (as, bleſſed be God, we have it exemplified in the truly Pious, and Evangelical Lives of* Multitudes *of our* Communion, *to let the World ſee what our* Rules, *if well obſerved, are able to do, and that the Fault lies not where 'tis generally charged) and we ſhould quickly ſtop the Mouths, and ſilence the Objections of the Adverſaries of it; and they would* be aſhamed that ſpeak of us when they beheld our good Converſation in Chriſt. *There are, and always have been, bad Men of all Perſwaſions; and nothing, I believe, has done a greater Diſſervice to our* Church, *nor opened a wider Door to our Diviſions, than the*

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Looſe and Scandalous Lives of thoſe, who ſhelter themſelves under its Venerable Name: *Whoſe Religion, (if they have any at all) reaches no further than Profeſſion, in crying,* The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord; *or who indeed are of no Religion at all, and conſequently will be ſure to profeſs (if any) that which is uppermoſt. And it is but too viſible what Advantages have been given and taken by this Means: It being a very true Obſervation, that an* Eminent Divine *of our own made,* That a very bad Opinion recommends it ſelf with great Advantage, if the Promoters of it ſeem Pious and Devout; but Profaneneſs and Immorality, if it will not confute, will yet ſhame and baffle the beſt Profeſſion in the World.

And Oh, that we could boaſt, that our Church were as truly Primitive *and* Apoſtolical *in its Manners, as it is in its Doctrine! That as by* One Reformation *we have brought our* Faith, *ſo by a* Second *we could bring our* Practice *to the* Primitive Standard. *That in our* own Lives firſt *we would Tranſcribe that*

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ſtrict Sobriety, Temperance, Chaſtity, Heavenly-mindedenſs, Devotion, *and* Exemplary Holineſs, *which was ſo eminently Conſpicuous in theirs:* '*And* '*then ſet our ſelves unanimouſly, to oppoſe* '*all Vice and Immorality, with the ſame* '*Bravery and Zeal, as the Holy and Good* '*Chriſtians of thoſe Times did; who* '*were infinitely careful, to keep the Ho-*'*nour of their Religion unſpotted, and* '*ſtifle every Sin in its Birth; and by* '*bringing Offenders to publick Shame and* '*Puniſhment, to keep them from* '*propagating the Malignant In-*'*fluence of a bad Example.*—— Cave Pr. Chr.

'*Who ſtrove, by all the Ways imaginable,* '*to diſcourage Sin; never thinking the* '*Curb ſtrong enough, that ſo they might* '*keep Perſons within the Bounds of Or-*'*der and Regularity.*—— *And it was* '*this their Piety and Integrity, their In-*'*finite Hatred againſt Sin, and their* '*Care and Zeal to keep up Strictneſs,* '*and Purity of Manners, that render'd* '*their Religion ſo Renowned and Tri-*'*umphant in the World.*

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But Diſſenters are actually engaged in this Work: What then? Is it not much to their Commendation that they are ſo? Yet I believe, if it ſhould come to a Pole, we ſhould find as many (if not more) of the Members of the Church of England, *heartily engaged in it. Theſe Societies were begun by the Members of our* Church, *and in one part of their Deſign, excluſive of all that were not ſtrictly of her Communion: But in this, for* Reformation of Manners, *it was but reaſonable, that all good Men, of Sound and Orthodox Principles in the main (tho differing in ſome Matters) ſhould be taken in. For ſurely,* doing Good *ought not to be made an* Encloſure. *Every good Man has a Right in Religion and good Manners, and ought to vindicate its Honour, and deſtroy, if poſſible, that which ſtrikes at the very* Root, *the* Life *and* Soul *of all Religion. But, after all, there is no ſuch thing as a Diſſenter, in one Senſe, to be found amongſt theſe Societies: For, whatever their Opinions may be at other times, none of them are brought along with them, when they meet to concert together about this good Work; nor are they known one*

to another, at such times, under any other Notion than that of Christians.

For the Justification of this, I take leave to transcribe the Substance of one of their Orders; which is, That no different Notion, in Matters of Religion, shall exclude any Persons from their Society; provided they are found in the Substantials of Religion, Persons of known Integrity, of Peaceable and Sober Lives. *And pursuant to this, 'tis agreed amongst them,* That no mention be made in the Society, *of any Person, under any* different Denomination as to Religion.

But to return. Here is a noble Field before us, for all good Men to shew their Zeal, in asserting the Glory of our Lord and Master; *in retrieving the Honour of our* common Christianity; *in rooting out that which is the* Bane *of all Religion; that Licentiousness and Debauchery, which preys upon its Vital Parts, and which at this present it miserably languishes and groans under. And could but all good Men so far agree, as to lay down all their undue Heats and Animosities; and to let their Warmth and Zeal run together, for a while, in this Channel; to imploy their*

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Labours, their Parts, and their Purſes, to extirpate the greateſt and worſt of Hereſies; *that Impiety and Prophaneneſs that reigns amongſt us, and is the Occaſion of ſeparating the Favour and Gracious Preſence of God from us all; who (tho' he may bear for a while, in Expectation of our Amendment) can never delight to do Good to a ſinful People: We ſhould hope, that when we have thus made* our Peace with God, *that he will heal our Diviſions, (which, probably, are a juſt Judgment of God upon us for our Sins, one of the bitter Fruits of that Immorality and Profaneneſs, which firſt took root amongſt us) and incline our Hearts to* Peace one with another.

And may the God of Peace, who maketh Men to be of one Mind in an Houſe, *unite us all in the Bonds of* TRUTH, HOLINESS, *and* LOVE; *that our* JERUSALEM *may at laſt be* as a City that is at Unity in it ſelf; THE HABITATION OF HOLINESS; THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY; AND THE JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH. *AMEN.*

A

SERMON,

Preached at the

Church of St. *Mary*,

IN

NOTTINGHAM.

Joſhua xxii. 20.

Did not Achan, *the Son of* Zerah, *commit a Treſpaſs in the accurſed thing, and Wrath fell on all the Congregation of* Iſrael, *and that Man periſhed not alone in his Iniquity?*

THE Words are the Recital of a Story, mention'd at large in the Sixth and Seventh Chapters of this Book. The Subſtance of it is this;

Joſhua, before the taking of *Jericho*, had, in the hearing of all the Hoſt of *Iſrael*, by a ſolemn *Anathema*, devoted all the Spoil of the City to utter Deſtruction; excepting only the Silver and the Gold, and the Veſſels of Braſs and Iron, which were Conſecrated unto the Lord, and appointed to be bronght into his Treaſury. And a *Curſe* was laid upon him, who ſhould preſume to convert either the one or the other to his private Uſe.

But *Achan* finding among the Spoils *a goodly Babyloniſh Garment*, 200 *Sheckels of Silver, and a Wedge of Gold*; and reſolving not to forego ſo fair an Opportunity of inriching himſelf, ſecretly conveys them away, and hides them in his Tent. But God ſees where Man does not; and it was not long before he gave a very manifeſt Evidence of his Diſpleaſure againſt the whole Congregation. For the *Iſraelites* being next to go up againſt *Ai* (a Weak and Inconſiderable Place, as they thought, able to make little or no Reſiſtance) thoſe 3000 Men, who were drawn out to fight againſt it, were ſhamefully put to flight, and about 36 of the Number ſlain.

Joſhua, and the *Elders of Iſrael*, (well knowing that this Defeat proceeded from ſome other Cauſe, than want of Number) with all the Signs of Grief and Aſtoniſhment, betake themſelves to Faſting and Prayer,

Prayer, and to enquire of God into the Cauſe of it. The Anſwer they receive was, that *Sin* had made this Breach betwixt God and them; *Iſrael hath ſinned, and they have alſo tranſgreſſed my Covenant, which I commanded them, they have taken of the Accurſed thing, and therefore* Iſrael *could not ſtand before their Enemies: Neither will I be with you any more, except ye take away the Accurſed thing from amongſt you.* By God's Direction therefore a Scrutiny was made, *Achan* mark'd out for the guilty Perſon; who, confeſſing his Crime, was immediately carried out of the Camp, *with the Silver, and the Garment, and the Wedge of Gold, his Sons and his Daughters, and all that he had, and brought into the Valley of* Achor, *where all* Iſrael *ſtoned him with Stones, and burnt them with Fire,* with all that belonged to them.

By this Exemplary Execution of Juſtice, the Wrath of God was appeaſed, the Courage of the *Iſraelites* revives, their Affairs proſper, and all their Enemies, where-ever they came, fell before them.

The reaſon of mentioning this ſo remarkable a Tranſaction in this Chapter, was a Report that was brought to *Joſhua*, and the Congregation, that their Brethren the Children of *Reuben*, and *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, upon their Return home from the Conqueſt of *Canaan*, had built a great

Altar near *Jordan*, which had it been for Burnt-Offering and Sacrifice, as *Joſhua*, &c. ſuppoſed, had undoubtedly been a very heinous Offence. The Ten Tribes, foreſeeing, that if they connived at this Sin of their Brethren, they ſhould bring the Guilt of it upon themſelves, and be common Sharers in the Judgments, which in all probability, God would quickly ſend amongſt them for ſo provoking a Sin, reſolve to declare War againſt them, and puniſh them with the Sword.

But before they commence a War, they prudently ſend an Honourable Embaſſy; who, in the Name of *Joſhua*, and all the Congregation, thus expoſtulate the Matter with them. *What Treſpaſs is this, that ye have committed againſt the Lord?* &c. *v.* 16. How durſt the Thoughts of committing ſo great a Sin, ever enter into your Hearts? Have ye ſo ſoon forgotten the Devouring Plague, that ſwept away ſo many of us in the Matter of *Peor? Is the Iniquity of* Peor *too little for us, from which we are not cleanſed until this Day, although there was a Plague in the Congregation of the Lord?* *v.* 17. And to obviate an Objection that might be made, That they were too buſie, and did unneceſſarily intereſt themſelves in an Affair that did not at all concern them, they declare that it was nothing but a juſt Regard they had to their own, and their Brethren's

Happineſs,

Happineſs, that put them upon ſo ungrateful a Work. For (ſay they) ſhould we paſs it over, God would puniſh *us* as well as *you*. *It will be, ſeeing ye rebel againſt the Lord to Day, that to Morrow he will be wroth with all the Congregation of* Iſrael, *v.* 18. With *you* for *Sinning*, and with *us* for *Conniving*, and not *Puniſhing* it. And to prove, that this was no Groundleſs Surmiſe of their own, but a Sad and Serious Truth, they quote for a Confirmation of it, the Story of *Achan*, here in the Text. *Did not* Achan, *the Son of* Zerah, *commit a Treſpaſs in the Accurſed thing, and Wrath fell on all the Congregation of* Iſrael, *and that Man periſhed not alone in his Iniquity?*

The Words, I think, will need no other Explication, than what they have received by the plain and full Account I have given, both of the Original Hiſtory, to which they refer, and of the Occaſion of them in this Place. And the uſe that I deſign to make of them, at this time, is from hence to ſhew,

Firſt, That God does often viſit the *whole Community*, for the Sins of ſome of the *particular Members* of it.

Secondly, That it is both the Duty and Intereſt of every Community, to endeavour to Prevent, Reſtrain, and Puniſh the Sins of the ſeveral Members of it.

Firſt, That God does often viſit the whole Community for the Sins of ſome of the particular Members of it.

This was the concurring Sentiment of *Joſhua*, and the whole Body of the Ten Tribes, Princes, Prieſts, and People; and the Ground of their Proceeding, as they did upon the Report of their Brethren's Sin. On the other Hand, the Two Tribes and a half object nothing againſt the Reaſonableneſs of their Arguments, or the Juſtice of their Intentions, but allow they had juſtly deſerved Puniſhment, if they had really been guilty of the Crime the Ten Tribes ſuppoſed them to be. *If it be in Rebellion, or if in Tranſgreſſion againſt the Lord*, (ſave us not this Day) *v.* 22.

And that this of *Achan*'s was no *extraordinary* and *ſingular* Caſe, appears by many Inſtances of the like Nature, we meet with, in the *Holy Scriptures*; I ſhall mention only three or four.

God puniſhed all the Family of *Abimelech*, becauſe he took *Sarah*, *Abraham*'s Wife, into his Houſe; and when he appear'd unto him in a Dream, he had threatned to puniſh his whole Kingdom, if he reſtor'd her not; as appears by *Abimelech*'s Reply, *Wilt thou alſo deſtroy a Righteous Nation?* Gen. 20. 4, 18.

The Lewdneſs of certain Sons of *Belial*, Inhabitants of *Gibeah* of *Benjamin*, in forcing the *Levite*'s Concubine, occaſion'd the utter Deſtruction of *Gibeah*, and its Inhabitants; and the Extirpation of (almoſt) the whole Tribe of *Benjamin*, only for their Countenancing,

nancing, and Protecting thoſe wicked Men, *Judges* 19, and 20 Chapters.

The three Years Famine in the Days of *David*, was for *Saul*'s Perjury, and his Perfidious dealing with the *Gibeonites*, contrary to the Security given them upon Oath, by *Joſhua*, and all the Princes of the Congregation, ſome Ages before, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. And this Sin of the Father occaſion'd alſo the Death of Seven of his Sons, who fell a Sacrifice, to appeaſe the *Gibeonites*, *v.* 6, 9.

Threeſcore and Ten Thouſand of the *Iſraelites* were cut off by a Peſtilence, occaſion'd by *David*'s Pride, in numbering the People, 2 *Sam.* 24.

Such Diſpenſations of Providence were taken notice of, even by the Heathens, and (were it neceſſary) many Examples of this kind might be produced, both out of their Authors, and the Hiſtories of our own, and other Nations; ſome of them written in ſuch Legible Characters, that, to the Admiration of all Men, they ſeem to point out the Sin, and the Offender.

But I forbear the mentioning of any Inſtances of this Nature, which are not Scriptural; becauſe (however uſeful it may be, to obſerve, and take warning by what we Read or Hear of this kind, yet) I think it unſafe to lay too much ſtreſs upon, or paſs a Peremptory Judgment of our own concerning them. The Counſels of God are ſecret, his Judgments unſearchable, and the Ways of His

Providence (farther than He has been pleas'd to diſcover them unto us) paſt finding out: And 'tis impoſſible for ſuch ſhort-ſighted Creatures as we are, amongſt ſuch Infinite Variety of Circumſtances, and in Actions depending upon the Will of a Free and Undetermin'd Agent, to trace back ſuch Events up to their Original Cauſes, and for want of Divine Revelation, to ſay with any Aſſurance, that God ſent ſuch a Judgment for this or that particular Sin. The Three Years Famine which happen'd in the Days of *David* may ſerve for a proof of this: *David* himſelf was ignorant of the Cauſe of it, and might have gueſs'd at a Thouſand Sins of *his own*, and the People of *that Age*, but would hardly have look'd back to the *laſt Generation*, had not the Anſwer of God expreſly told him, *That it was for* Saul *and his bloody Houſe, becauſe he ſlew the* Gibeonites. *Interdum latet culpa, ubi non latet pœna.* The Puniſhment is oftentimes very viſible, when the Sin, that occaſion'd it, lyes out of Sight, and conceal'd from Humane Eyes. It is enough for us to know in the general, that the ſame God is ſtill concerned in the Government of the World; that Sin is equally odious to him; nay, our Guilt, in committing Sins of the ſame kind, *greater*; in reſpect of the greater Obligations we now lye under; the clearer Revelation of our Duty, and the *Wrath of God revealed from Heaven againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men*;

and

and we have no Reaſon to expect, but that, if we ſin as *others* have done, God will deal with *us*, as we read he hath dealt with *others*. St. *Paul* has told us expreſly, that the ſeveral Inſtances we meet with in the Hiſtory of the *Old Teſtament* of God's Wrath and Vengeance upon Sinners, happen'd unto them for *Enſamples*; not only as Inſtances of God's ſevere Wrath upon *them* for their Sins, but as *Examples* for *us*; to let all the ſucceeding Generations of the World know, how God will deal with all Sinners; and withal, that God in his wiſe Providence (to ſupply the want of Divine Revelation in the laſt Ages) had order'd them to be recorded in the Holy Scriptures, that we might hear, and fear, and take warning; and by his Dealings with *them*, learn how he will deal with *us*: For having mention'd ſeveral Remarkable Judgments of God upon the *Jews*, he ſays, *That all theſe things happen'd unto them for Enſamples, and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. And we may apply to our ſelves, what God ſays of the *Jews*, by the Prophet *Zephaniah*, Ch. 3. V. 6, 7. *I have cut off the Nations, their Towers are deſolate, I made their Streets waſte, that none paſſeth by; their Cities are deſtroyed, that there is no Man, that there is none Inhabitant: I ſaid, ſurely thou wilt fear me*, (and by ſeeing their Exemplary Puniſhment) *thou wilt receive Inſtruction.*

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I proceed now to the Second thing I propounded to ſpeak to.

2. That it is both the Duty and Intereſt of every Community, to endeavour to Prevent, Reſtrain, and Puniſh the Sins of the ſeveral Members of it.

That cannot but be a *Duty*, the Neglect whereof brings *Guilt*; and the doing of that cannot but be our *Intereſt*, which engages the favourable Preſence of God amongſt us, and prevents the dreadful Effects of his Indignation. By doing our Duty, we take the moſt effectual Courſe to reſtrain our Brother from ſinning; (the *Guilt* of his Sins, however, will not lye at our Doors) and this, by Conſequence, will be our higheſt Intereſt; becauſe thereby we prevent thoſe Judgments, which God might juſtly inflict upon the *whole Community* for their ſakes; nay, and for *ours* too, if *they ſin*, and *we ſuffer it*; if *they* openly provoke him, and *we* endeavour not (as in our Duty we are bound) to *prevent* and *reſtrain* them.

The Community in general, or that part of it, in whom the Legiſlative Power is lodged, are by wholſome Laws and Conſtitutions of their own, to provide againſt the Violation of the Laws of God. Thus God himſelf thought fit to back the *Moral* Law with the *Judicial*, and to put a *Sword* into the Magiſtrate's Hand, which (like the *flaming Sword* in Paradiſe) was to turn every

every way, to guard it, and deter Men from a Presumptuous Violation thereof. This was practised by all the Religious Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*; and in all Christians Nations, the Laws of God have always been fenced by those of the *State*, that such as would not be obedient for *Conscience-sake*, might be aw'd into their Duty, by the Terrour of the *Magistrate*, and the Fear of those *Temporal Mulcts*, and *Punishments*, which by the Municipal Laws of the Nation, he had Power to inflict upon evil Doers.

The particular Members of a Community, are to yield Obedience both to the *Laws of God*, and in their several Stations to act according to the Directions of those *Ordinances of Men for the Lord's sake*. By the Laws of our Holy Religion, and the general Rules of *Charity*, we are oblig'd to do what in us lyes, to save our Brother's Soul, and prevent his Eternal Ruin; and by the Laws of the Nation, we are impower'd to do several things, towards the *furthering* and *carrying on* of this good Work. If we then *wilfully* neglect the doing of that, which either by the Laws of Christianity we are *commanded*, or by the Laws of the Nation we are *impower'd* and *enabled* to do, we bring our selves under the Guilt of those Sins, which by the Faithful Discharge of our Duty, we might have prevented or restrained.

ſtrained. *In cujus manu eſt ut prohibeat, jubet agi ſi non prohibet admitti.* Salv. He in effect bids Men ſin, that reſtrains not a wicked Action, when it is in his Power.

Thus one that is *Sober* and *Chaſte* himſelf, that *fears God*, and *trembles* at an *Oath*, may bring upon himſelf the Guilt of the Drunkards, the Adulterers, and the Swearers Sins. And where theſe or the like Publick, Crying, and Scandalous Sins are committed by one part of the Community, and no Care taken by the other, to do what the Laws of God, and the Nation direct, to *prevent*, *reſtrain*, and *puniſh* them, the Guilt of thoſe Sins muſt be look'd upon, to lye upon the whole Body.

This was the Caſe of the *Iſraelites* in this Chapter. They well knew, that God would viſit their Brethren's Sin upon them, if they, the *governing part*, did paſs it over, and let it go unpuniſhed; and therefore it was reſolved, in an Aſſembly of the *Elders* of *Iſrael*, meeting for that Purpoſe at *Shiloh*, to proceed againſt them, as *Rebels* againſt God's, and their Authority.

As to the Caſe of *Achan*, the Guilt lay wholly concealed; (at leaſt from the Knowledge of *Joſhua* and the *Elders*) till God, by puniſhing them all, put them upon inquiring into the Cauſe of it, and finding out the Offender: Which ſtrongly proves, that God imputes to the Community, the Sins of the Members

of

of it; and that, if they do not find out, and puniſh them, God will find out, and puniſh both the *Sinners* and *them* too. 'Tis ſaid in Ch. 7. 1. *The Children of* Iſrael *committed a Treſpaſs in the Accurſed thing.* Tho' the Sacriledge was only *Achan*'s, yet the whole Body was look'd upon to be guilty, till they had puniſhed him for it. And if for *one Sin* of *Achan* (which lay conceal'd) the whole Congregation of *Iſrael* taſted of God's Wrath; much greater Reaſon have we to fear it, when the Sins of the Nation are *great*, *many*, and *notoriouſly Scandalous*; and much greater ſtill, if one part of it connives at the Sins of the other: When the Guilt does thus become general, we have great Reaſon to fear the Puniſhment will be ſo too.

I ſhall therefore ſhew you what Duties lye upon the ſeveral Members of a Community, in order to *prevent*, and *reſtrain* the Growth of Sin amongſt them, which I ſhall conſider under that Diviſion, which includes all the Members of a Society, Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and Private Perſons. I ſhall begin with the Duties of Private Perſons, as being moſt general, and moſt of them ſuch, as Magiſtrates and Miniſters themſelves are equally (nay, in a higher degree, upon the Account of the Eminence of their Stations) concerned in.

1. Pri-

1. Private Perſons (as indeed every Body elſe) cannot do better than to begin at home; to ſee that their *own* Lives be Holy, Blameleſs, and Exemplary; that the Conſciouſneſs of their *own* Guilt, may not make their Blood to riſe in their Faces, when they are to *pull out the Mote out of their Brother's Eye*. If they are in any degree of Superiority, they are to inſtruct, and rule well their own Families; and (as far as their juſt Power reaches) to curb, reſtrain, and puniſh their Children and Servants that do amiſs. Every one of us, undoubtedly is accountable to God, for the Uſe and Exerciſe of that degree of Power He has intruſted us with. We are to look upon it as a *Talent*, that He has given us to *trade withal*; and whoever is wanting to himſelf, or them, in His neceſſary Duty, may be aſſured the guilt of their wicked Actions will lye at his Door. It was a heavy Judgment that fell upon the Houſe of *Eli*, *becauſe his Sons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained 'em not*, 1 Sam. 3. 13.

But our Duty (tho' it ſhould begin there) is not confin'd within the Walls of our own Houſe. In the Exerciſe of our Spiritual, as well as our Corporal Charity, *as we have Opportunity, we are to do Good unto all Men*; to be compaſſionately zealous to ſave thoſe Souls, that are worth more than *Thouſands of Gold and Silver*; thoſe Souls, for the

the ranſoming of which from Eternal Death, our Bleſſed Saviour *Chriſt Jeſus* was content to ſhed his Precious Blood: To endeavour, by Friendly, Seaſonable, and Affectionate Admonition, and Reproof, to reclaim the Wicked; to ſhew them their Danger, and to tell them the Truth, tho' they count us their Enemies for ſo doing. St. *Paul* commands us, *to admoniſh one another. To exhort one another daily, leſt any of us be hardned through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin*, Heb. 3. 13.

It was a Precept given to the *Jews*, Lev. 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.* The Marginal reading of which Place, is a very weighty Reaſon to enforce the Precept: *Thou ſhalt, in any wiſe, rebuke thy Neighbour, that thou bear not Sin for him*, or *for his ſake*, (i. e.) as one explains it; 'Thou 'ſhalt not make thy ſelf guilty of his Sin, 'as thou wilt aſſuredly do, if thou doſt 'not perform thy Duty of rebuking him 'for it; which is a likely way, and a Courſe 'appointed by God, to remove the Guilt of 'his Sin from him; and conſequently, as it 'was his Fault that he ſinned, and contract-'ed Guilt, ſo it is thy Fault, that his Guilt 'continues upon him. And we are told, that ſome of the *Jews* underſtood it thus, and that they had a Saying amongſt themſelves, *Jeruſalem had never been deſtroy'd,*

but

but becauſe one Neighbour did not rebuke another.

But (tho' every one ſhould do what he can to ſave his Brother's Soul) yet Admonition and Reproof is not every Body's Talent; to do it as it ought to be done, requires a larger Stock of Knowledge and Prudence, than every one can be ſuppoſed to be Maſter of; for want of which, it but too often expoſes Men to the Scorn, and Deriſion of Fools. Nor is it *every Perſon* indifferently that you are to reprove, but thoſe whom your Reproofs may be likely to do Good upon; nor at all times, but when they are moſt likely to gain Admittance; and the *Calm* and the *Cool* of the Day is certainly fitteſt for this Purpoſe. 'Tis *Folly*, and not *Charity*, to reprove a Man when he is *Drunk*, or in the height of his *Rage* and *Fury*; all the Good we can do at ſuch times, is only to *Pity* and *Pray* for them; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

When our neceſſary Buſineſs calls us abroad into the World, if we *chance* (for our *Choice* it ſhould not be) to fall into the Company of Debauch'd, Licentious, and Prophane Perſons, we muſt beware of doing any thing that may teſtifie our Approbation of their Wickedneſs, much leſs are we to comply with them (as I fear too many do) out of an *Eaſineſs* of Temper, or for fear of being reproach'd for *Hypocrites*,

Moroſe

Moroſe or *Dull*. Our Conſcience muſt never give way to that we call *Civility*, *Complaiſance*, or *good Breeding*; to laugh for Company with Fools, when they *make a Mock of Sin*; break their Jeſts upon Religion, and the Holy Scriptures; prophane the Name of God with ſuch horrid Oaths and Imprecations, as we ſhould tremble to hear. The ſureſt way to preſerve our Innocence at ſuch times, is to withdraw; however, boldly to reprove them, and teſtifie our utmoſt Abhorrence and Deteſtation of their Wickedneſs.

When the Sinner's Heart is hardned, beyond the reach of *Admonition* and *Reproof*, I do not know how you can better expreſs your Charity to him and others, than by bringing him under the *Cenſure* of the Magiſtrate, and expoſing him to *Shame* and *Puniſhment*. This is the likelieſt way to reclaim him, and bring him to Amendment; to preſerve *others* from the Pernicious Conſequence of his wicked Example, and *your ſelves*, and the Nation from the *Guilt* and *Puniſhment* of thoſe Sins, which call aloud to Heaven for *Vengeance* againſt us.

'Tis what the Laws of the Nation expect from you; and as *good Subjects* you ſhould further the Execution of all good Laws; as *good Chriſtians*, thoſe eſpecially, which are made for the *Lord's ſake*, for the Advancement of his Glory, for the Honour of our Religion, for the reſcuing the Soul of our

Brother out of the Snare of the Devil, and the averting of those Judgments, which for the crying Sins of the Nation, apparently threaten us.

They that heard the Son of the *Egyptian* Blaſpheme the Name of the Lord, and Curſe, accuſed him before the Magiſtrate; the Magiſtrate put him in Ward, and *God* Himſelf ſo far approved what was done, as by the Mouth of *Moſes*, to pronounce the Sentence of Death againſt him, *Lev.* 24. The very ſame Circumſtances we meet with in the Caſe of the Sabbath-breaker, *Num.* 15. The Parents, that had an Ungracious, and Incorrigible Son, were to accuſe him before *the Elders of their City, in the Gate of Judgment*, Deut. 21. 19. And in *Lev.* 5. 1. The Guilt of the Sin is laid upon him that is privy to it, and conceals it: *If a Soul ſin, and hear the Voice of Swearing, and is a Witneſs, whether he hath ſeen or known of it, if he do not utter it, then he ſhall bear his Iniquity.*

The ancient *Jews*, we are told, had a Doctrine, drawn from the Text, *Lev.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer Sin upon thy Brother*: 'That when 'any Man offended againſt another, in things concerning *themſelves*, re- 'lating to their *Civil Affairs*, he was to be 'reproved once, or twice, or thrice, if the 'Matter required, but without Sharpneſs; 'and

Dr. Patr. in Loc.

'and ſo that he was not expoſed to publick 'Shame: But if the Offence was againſt 'God, in Matters of *Religion*, they ſay, 'Private Reproof was firſt to be given, and 'then *Publick* before *all*.

When we can do nothing elſe towards the preventing of Sin, we may mourn in Secret (as *David* and *Jer.* did) for all the Abominations of the Land; and be inwardly grieved for that which is not in our Power to redreſs. We may ſtand in the Breach, as *Moſes* did, and by our earneſt Prayers beſeech Almighty God to pour out a Spirit of Repentance and Reformation upon the Kingdom; to avert thoſe Judgments which our Sins call for, to mollifie the Obdurate Hearts, to awaken the Stupified Conſciences, and to open the Blinded Eyes of all Obſtinate Sinners, before they come into the Place of Torments.

2. The Miniſters of Chriſt, by Vertue of their *Function*, the Charge that was committed to them *before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and their own *Particular* and *Solemn* Engagements, when they entred into that *Holy Office*, are under the higheſt Obligations, to uſe their utmoſt Endeavour to *prevent* and *ſtop* the Growth of Sin. We are to have HOLINESS TO THE LORD viſibly written in our Foreheads; to be *burning and ſhining Lights*, that in our Innocent and Exemplary Lives, Men may behold

the Lovelineſs of that Virtue and Piety, we recommend to their Practice. We are publickly, as well as privately, to Inſtruct, Perſwade, Admoniſh, and Rebuke, and that with all Authority, as the *Embaſſadors of Chriſt*, and the *Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts*. If we then deal unfaithfully in the great Truſt, our Lord and Maſter has been pleaſed to repoſe in us; if we fear the Faces of Men, ſpare their Sins for their Perſons ſake, in hopes of their Favour, or for fear of their Frowns; if we tell them only of their ſmaller Faults, and paſs over ſlightly their Drunkenneſs, their Sabbath-breaking, their prophane Curſing, Swearing, and Blaſphemy; Applying Lenitives, and Mollifying Ointments, to thoſe Impoſthumated Wounds we ſhould launce to the quick; if we thus corrupt the Covenant of *Levi*, deal partially, and accept Perſons in the Law, God will *require it*; we ſhall intitle our ſelves to the Guilt of their Sins, and their Blood will cry to Heaven for Vengeance againſt us. And a terrible thing it is to conſider, that our own Souls muſt go, for thoſe we have loſt by our wilful Neglect or Unfaithfulneſs. *If thou ſpeakeſt not to warn the Wicked from his wicked Ways, that ſame wicked Man ſhall die in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at thy Hands*, Ezek. 3. 18.

Our Lord has vouchſafed us the peculiar Ho-

Honour, of making us the Dreſſers of his Vineyard; and if we bring him of the Fruits of it, when he comes again, he will repay us whatſoever we have laid out in his Work, he will reward all our Pains and Labour of Love, with a Crown of Glory, that will outſhine the brighteſt Stars in the Firmament. But Ten Thouſand Woes will fall upon us, if by our Negligence the Vintage fail, nay, *more*, if we our ſelves help to deſtroy it, if we break down the Hedges, to make way for the Spoilers to enter; if, inſtead of ſaving thoſe Souls, we have undertaken to watch over, we help to deſtroy them, if we make our ſelves *vile*, and by our Examples teach Men to break God's Commandments, and deſpiſe thoſe Threatnings we denounce againſt their Sins. This is that *horrible thing*, which God complains of in the Prophets of *Jeruſalem*, that they themſelves committed rhe very ſame things they ſhould have reformed in others, and by their wicked Examples, *ſtrengthned the Hands of evil Doers, that none returned from his Wickedneſs, and that from them Prophaneneſs was gone forth into all the Land.* Jer. 22. 14, 15. *Let them return unto us, but let us not turn unto them*; let them both *hear* and *ſee* what they ſhould be. *Let us gird up our Loins, and ſpeak unto them all that God commands us, and utter his Judgments againſt them, concern-*

ing all their Wickedneſs. If they *hate to be reformed*, and will *walk in the Ways of their own Hearts*, yet let them know, that *a Prophet has been amongſt them*; and let us be ſure *to deliver our own Souls.*

3. Magiſtrates are alſo under a particular Obligation to uſe their Endeavours to *prevent* and *ſtop* the Growth of Sin. The Apoſtle declares this to be the End of this *Ordinance of God*, that the Magiſtrate, who is his *Miniſter*, and inveſted with Power and Authority from him, may not *bear the Sword in vain*, but be (as much as poſſible, what he is, whom he repreſents) an Encourager of good and vertuous Perſons, and a Terrour to evil Doers. And were it not for the fear of ſome *preſent* Shame, Smart or Puniſhment, to reſtrain 'em. Notwithſtanding the Eternal Puniſhments of the World to come, (by ſome not believed, by others, as being at ſuch a Diſtance, little regarded) Men would quickly break thro' all the Obligations and Ties of *Duty* and *Conſcience*, and the World would ſoon become a Wilderneſs.

Your Caſe therefore is very different from that of all others; they can *perſwade* and *rebuke*, but you are intruſted with the Execution of the Laws, and can *puniſh*; and he that can *puniſh*, can in a great meaſure *hinder*; and he that can hinder, and *does not*, muſt in all Reaſon be look'd upon to *approve*,

approve, however not much to *diſlike* what is done. Herein you act for *God*, to ſecure His Honour and Obedience to his Laws, and your Omiſſion will bring you under the *Guilt* of thoſe Sins, which 'tis in your Power to reſtrain, but do not.

It was for ſuch a neglect of Diſcipline, that God rent the Kingdom of *Iſrael* from the Houſe of *Saul*, and the Prieſthood from the Poſterity of *Eli*. God had given *Saul* a Peremptory Command, to ſmite *Amaleck*, and utterly deſtroy all that they had, 1 *Sam.* 15. The People, notwithſtanding, ſpared the beſt of the Sheep, and of the Oxen; this Fault of theirs *Samuel* charges upon *Saul*; *Thou haſt not obeyed the Voice of the Lord*; becauſe he, by virtue of that *Power* and *Authority* that God had veſted him with, might have reſtrained them, but did not; at laſt *Saul* owns his Fault, *I have ſinned, I have tranſgreſſed the Commandment of the Lord, and thy Word, becauſe I feared the People, and obeyed their Voice.* This Poorneſs of Spirit made him connive at what they did, without daring to interpoſe his Authority. A ſorry Excuſe out of the Mouth of a *Magiſtrate*, and a *King*; not much unlike that Reaſon of *Pilate*, for condemning Innocent Blood; *becauſe the People were inſtant with loud Voices, requiring that he ſhould be Crucified, he gave Sentence that it ſhould be as they required.* Luke 23. 23,24.

Becauſe *Eli* exerciſed not that (more than *Paternal*) Authority, that he had as the Civil Magiſtrate, to puniſh his Sons for that Prophaneneſs and Uncleanneſs of theirs, which made *Men abhor the Offerings of the Lord*; their Sins are laid at his Door, and a heavy Puniſhment fell upon him and his Poſterity for it. *I will judge his Houſe for ever, for the Sin which he knoweth, becauſe his Sons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not. Therefore I have ſworn unto the Houſe of* Eli, *that the Iniquity of* Eli's *Houſe ſhall not be purged with Sacrifice, nor Offering for ever*, 1 Sam. 3.13,14.

And now, did we all, Magiſtrates, Miniſters and People, unanimouſly join in the Diſcharge of our reſpective Duties, we need not doubt (by the Bleſſing of God) of ſeeing the height of Sin quickly abated: And I ſhould hope none of us would be wanting to his neceſſary Duty, did we but conſider the Importance of thoſe Obligations we lye under, to engage us to a Conſcientious Performance of it; which being general, will more or leſs affect us all.

1. *That tender Regard we ought to have to the Glory and Honour of Almighty God.* The debauch'd and wicked Lives of Chriſtians bring a Blot and Stain upon our Religion, and reflect a manifeſt Diſhonour upon that God, whom we profeſs to ſerve and obey. All Religion muſt be ſuppoſed to

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be agreeable to the Nature and Temper of that God whom the Profeſſors of it do worſhip. No wonder then if the *Gentiles* ſerved their gods with ſuch abominable Rites and Ceremonies; that they lived in all Uncleanneſs, Revellings, and Drunkenneſs; becauſe theſe Practices were agreeable to the Temper of a *Jupiter*, a *Venus*, and a *Bacchus*; the one a Whoremonger, the other a Strumpet, and the third a Drunkard. But the *God* whom we ſerve is *Holy*, one that takes no Pleaſure in ſuch, or any other Wickedneſs. *He hates all Workers of Iniquity*, and has forbidden all thoſe to take his Covenant into their Mouths, that *hate to be reformed.*

Now when Men, that profeſs themſelves to be the Servants of this God, are openly Wicked and Licentious; what an eaſie and natural Inference would it be for one, to make, who is a Stranger to our Religion? As are the Lives of the Generality of his Servants, ſuch is the God they worſhip. Thus *the Name of God was blaſphemed amongſt the Gentiles*, in the Apoſtle's time. The impure Lives of the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity obſtructed their Converſion, and occaſioned in them *mean* and *diſhonourable* Thoughts concerning both their *God* and their *Religion.* Is God amongſt us of a Truth? And is the God whom we worſhip Holy? How then come the Lives of his profeſſed Servants to be ſo *Lewd* and *Vicious*,

as if they had devoted themſelves to a drunken *Bacchus*, or an obſcene *Priapus*? It were more for his Honour, not to own him for our Lord and Maſter, if we do not live as becomes his Servants. And can we ſit ſtill, and look on without Indignation? See his *Honour* and his *Laws* trampled in the Duſt, and do nothing towards the Vindication of it, or them? Magiſtrates and Miniſters eſpecially, being his Repreſentatives in the World, the one in the *Church*, the other in the *State*, ought to have a more than ordinary Concern for this. When Men dare openly affront and contemn our Lord and Maſter, dare not we ſpeak and act for Him? Our Endeavours, in advancing His Honour, will reflect back with the greateſt Luſtre upon our own Perſons, and Imployments; for *them that honour me* (ſays God) *I will honour*. And what can we do more for His Honour, than to reform a debauch'd and corrupt Age? God is glorified by the Obedience of his Servants; and did we but all join to do our Duties, we might, by the Bleſſing of God, bring Religion again into Reputation in the World; be the happy Inſtruments of begetting a People unto God, to bring him Glory, and do him Service in the World; to pray unto him, and praiſe His Holy Name, with thoſe Tongues, wherewith they now Blaſpheme it.

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2. *The Regard we ought to have to the Welfare of our Brethren*; I mean the Salvation of their Precious and Immortal Souls. 'Tis the higheſt Act of Charity we can do, not to *ſuffer Sin upon our Brother.* If our Enemies Beaſt go aſtray, we are to bring him home again; if we ſee him labouring under his Burden, we are to help with him; and if we ſee our Brother lying wounded by the way, ſhall we paſs by unconcern'd, leave him wallowing in his Blood, and not bind up his Wounds, pouring in Oyl and Wine? A gentle *Admonition*, or a ſharp *Reproof*, may, for ought we know, reſtore him, bring him to a Senſe of his Sins, and then thou haſt *ſaved a Soul from Death.* If theſe *gentler* Methods will not do, we muſt out of Compaſſion, tho' againſt their Will, *pluck them like Brands out of the Fire*; ſtop their Way with Briars and Thorns, when they are running on ſo deſperately to their own Deſtruction.

That which is intended in all Puniſhments (not Capital) is to amend the *Guilty* Perſon, and to prevent Contagion in thoſe that are *Innocent*; that *others may hear and fear, and do no more ſo wickedly.* And were the Penal Laws, againſt the Vices and Corruptions of the Age, duly put in Execution, they might in this Reſpect, be of great Advantage to all ſorts of Men amongſt us.

1. *To thoſe that are Guilty.* Shame and Fear have always been obſerved to have very extraordinary Effects on the Minds of Men. The very Shame of coming under the Cenſure of the Magiſtrate in ſome, and the *Fear* of the Penalty in others, may in ſome meaſure ſtop the growing Habits of Sin; and by degrees, work kindly upon 'em, towards the bringing of 'em to Conſideration firſt, and in time to a real Reformation. There are ſome, that are but *Novices* in this School, *young Diſciples* of the old Maſters, and a due Execution of the Penal Laws might be very beneficial to them. Wickedneſs has its time of growing, before it comes to its Gigantick Stature. No Man was ever a hardned Sinner at firſt; 'tis by Steps and Degrees that Men aſcend into the *Seat of the Scornful*; and by many repeated Acts, that they come to a confirmed Habit of Sin. Men, at firſt, ſin with ſome Reluctancy of Conſcience, and afterwards bluſh at the Thoughts of their own Folly; and when they are thus ſtruggling, between the Checks of their Conſcience on the one Hand, and the Temptations of Sin on the other; the Scales ſeem to hang pretty even, and a ſmall thing would give the turn either way; and there is no doubt but the *Fear* of Puniſhment, or the *Diſgrace* and *Shame* of having their Sins made Publick, may prevail with ſuch Perſons

ſons to lay aſide the Thoughts of the Sin for that time: If they have committed ſome Acts of it, it may prevent a *confirmed* Habit; and it may be they may have Reaſon to bleſs God for a ſeaſonable Reproof or Puniſhment, and be the better for it ever after.

If it be ſaid, ſuch Reſtraint will but make a great many Hypocrites. *Anſw.* If that were all the Good it would do, it is better however to have 'em ſin with Modeſty, and confeſs to the World what they ſhould be, than to be *infamouſly Scandalous*, and that their fatal Examples ſhould Poyſon and Debauch others. If they are reſolved to Sin, in deſpite of the Laws of *God* and *Man*, let 'em cloath their Sins with the Mantle of Darkneſs, and Secrecy: Let Vice ſneak, and ſeek retiring Holes; coverits deformed Face with a Mask, and not inſolently brave it out in the *Streets*, and in the Face of the *Sun*. For,

2. *Such a Reſtraint will be of very great Advantage, and prevent the Debauching of thoſe amongſt us, who are yet Innocent:* Sin is a Leproſie, and the Diſeaſe is catching; and whilſt bold Offenders are ſuffered to *glory in their Shame*, and to have their unlimited Range, they effectually inſtruct the World in Wickedneſs, but brand 'em with a Mark of *Infamy* and *Diſgrace*, and you will in a great Meaſure ſtop the Infection. Example has a ſtrange Inſinuating Power; the

the Poyſon of it ſlides inſenſibly into us, we know not how, and the Propenſity of the Corrupt Nature within us, inclining us to Evil more than to that which is Good, makes us ſooner take the Impreſſion of a wicked, than of a good Example.

And when this natural Byaſs, which of it ſelf draws but too powerfully to any thing that is ſinful, is ſtrengthned with the Example and Encouragement of ſo many Drunkards, Prophane and Lewd Perſons, that are abroad in the World, no wonder if it baffle all the Force of Precept and Inſtruction, whether of private Perſons or Miniſters, and lead Men at laſt to all manner of Licentiouſneſs and Debauchery.

Nor is it the leaſt thing to be conſidered, the happy Influence ſuch a Reſtraint may have towards the bettering of the next Generation; the Hopes of which (under God) depends chiefly upon the *Sober* and *Pious* Education of our Children. If we cannot effectually reform the preſent Age, yet the doing of any thing towards the mending the next, would be a piece of wonderful good Service both to Church and State. *Vitia tranſmittit ad poſteros, qui præſentibus culpis ignoſcit*, Sen. He that ſpares the Vices of the preſent Age, does nothing elſe in effect, but hand 'em down to Poſterity. Families are the Foundation of Church and State; and generally as Children come out thence,

thence, either ſeaſon'd with *Piety*, or tinctur'd with *Wickedneſs*, they prove afterwards either the *Bleſſings*, or the *Banes* of Church and Nation.

And for this Reaſon (as well as out of a Regard to their Perſonal Intereſt, both Temporal and Eternal) Parents ſhould endeavour to beget in their Minds an *early* Senſe of Piety, to prevent the Devil, and give Religion the firſt Poſſeſſion of their Souls. This will be the likelieſt way to make 'em good Men; to entail the Bleſſing of God upon them, to make them Inſtruments of much Good in their Generation, and to ſecure the Everlaſting Salvation of their Souls hereafter. But if Magiſtrates ſuffer *Licentiouſneſs* to walk the Streets without Controul, all this Care and Diligence of Parents, within their own Walls, will be (in a great Meaſure) defeated, by the Infectious Air, they will be ſure to ſuck in, if they do but peep abroad.

And there muſt needs be a great Fault ſomewhere in Parents or Magiſtrates, if not in both; or elſe we ſhould not, ſo frequently, hear the Children in the *Streets ſpeak the Language of* Aſhdod; liſp out an Oath, or a Curſe, or an obſcene Expreſſion, and Prophane the Sacred Name of God, and that, many times, before they have learnt how to invoke it.

3. *A Regard to our ſelves, to our own Happineſs and Security.* Were the Danger only to themſelves, and they only to reap the Fruits of their own Folly, we might with the better Grace juſtifie to our ſelves and the World, that Temper of *Gallio*, who *cared for none of thoſe things.* And indeed nothing is more common, than to hear wicked Men, when at any time, they are troubled (or affronted as they think) with a Friendly Advice, or a Charitable Reprimand, reply, *Mind your own Buſineſs, and trouble not your ſelf about what I do. If I do amiſs, it is I muſt ſuffer for it, and not you.* Were there Truth in all they ſay, yet in Charity and Compaſſion we are to do what we can, to prevent their *Eternal Ruin:* But more eſpecially ſo, when we endanger our own Souls by the neglect of our Duty; and when they are likely to involve us in thoſe Judgments, they are extorting from the Hands of the Almighty. The Providence of God does not always *miraculouſly* interpoſe, to ſeparate the *Righteous from the Wicked, the Precious from the Vile*; but in the common Calamities, which he ſends upon the World, to correct the Peccant Humours of it, and reſtrain the Inſolency of bold Offenders, lets them ſuffer in common with others; either to puniſh their Remiſneſs in winking at the Prophaneneſs and Debaucheries of the Age; or becauſe he knows how

how to compenſate their Sufferings, by ſome *greater* Good another way. However, if they generally ſhare in the common Calamities, that Sin occaſions in the World, it certainly concerns them (for their own ſakes) to do what they can, not to neglect any of thoſe Religious or Lawful Means, for the reſtraining of thoſe Sins, that *ripen* a Nation for Judgment. Muſt I not hold my Neighbour's Hands, who is going to ſet his own Houſe on Fire? Or when it is all in Flames, is it not my Intereſt to help to extinguiſh them?

4. *A Regard to the Welfare and Happineſs of the Place and Nation we live in.* The Title of *Pater Patriæ*, a Father or Patriot of his Country, was ambitiouſly courted by the greateſt of the *Roman Emperors*, and always look't upon, to reflect a great deal of Honour on the Perſon that deſervedly wore it. And none certainly has a juſter Right to it, or does his Country better Service, than he that does that, which will engage God's favourable Preſence and Protection; and derive the Bleſſings of Heaven upon it.

Religion has always been experienced to have a happy Influence on Humane Societies, and Diſſolution of Manners, and Contempt of Religion, obſerved to be the ſure Prognoſticks of the Approaching Ruin of Church and Nation; and that (as for other

Reaſons in the nature of things, ſo) eſpecially, as they procure the Favour of Almighty God, and engage him either to reward and proſper, or provoke him to plague and puniſh them. Whilſt we do our Duty, we intitle our ſelves to his Protection, and then *Salvation will the Lord appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.* But if we provoke him to withdraw his Gracious Preſence from us, it is not our ſtrong Hold within, nor our Moat and Wooden Walls without, not our Native Courage at home, nor our numerous and powerful Alliances abroad, that can ſecure us, when *our Defence is departed from us.* It was *Machiavel*'s Rule, That the readieſt way to ruin a State, would be to lay the Reins on the People's Necks. And an older *Politician* than he, when he ſaw, that none of his Sorceries or Inchantments would prevail for a Curſe upon *Iſrael*, teaches the *Moabites* this curſed Policy, to draw them by ſome Means or other to ſin againſt their *God*: This he thought would make them forfeit his Protection, and bring down that *Curſe* upon them, which he could not prevail for, and make them become an *eaſie* Prey to their Enemies.

An Eminent Inſtance of this we have here in the Caſe of *Achan.* What a wonderful Alteration did that one Sin of his make amongſt the *Iſraelites!* God had promiſed to put the Fear and the Dread of them upon all

all their Enemies; to go before them as their Captain, and fight their Battles for them; that one of them ſhould chaſe a Thouſand, and two put Ten Thouſand to flight. And the very firſt Attempt they made in the Land of *Canaan*, in taking a Walled and well-fortified City, without the Expence of one drop of Blood, or ſo much as ſtriking a Stroak, was a miraculous Demonſtration of an Almighty Power fighting for them. The very Sound of the *Rams-Horns*, and the *Shouting* of the People, made way for them to enter *Jericho*, without the Trouble of Scaling, or Battering their Walls: And yet the Hearts of this People, that were ſometimes bold as Lions, when they had ſinned againſt God, *melted in 'em, and became as Water*, Guilt diſarm'd 'em, and ſunk their Courage, and a handful of Men, a deſpicable Enemy, inſults over the (once Invincible) *Armies of the Lord of Hoſts*. What Folly is it then for Men to look no further than their own private Concerns, and to have no Regard for the common Good of the Nation, or the Place they live in? 'Tis certainly our greateſt Intereſt to join together, to root out thoſe Enormities, which (if God be not merciful to us) will ruin us all in the end. But eſpecially you that are intruſted with the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, are to uſe the Power that God has given you, and not to ſheath the *Sword* he has put

into your Hands, when there is occaſion of uſing it, for His Glory, your own, your Brethren's, and your Country's Good. This would be the way to provoke him to unſheath *His Glittering Sword*, to force His unwilling Hands *to take hold of Judgment, to render Vengeance to His Enemies, and to reward them that hate him.* Juſtice (where the Sins of the Nation loudly call for it) is a *Sacrifice* better pleaſing to Almighty God, than all our Faſting, Prayers, and Tears. It is good indeed (nay, in Duty we are obliged) by our moſt *Zealous* and *Importunate* Prayers, to beſeech Almighty God to forgive the *Crying* Sins of the Nation; but it is better, if we can, to *prevent* them. It is good to beſeech him to avert that *Wrath* we have juſtly deſerved; but it is better to *reſtrain* and *puniſh* thoſe that provoke him to be angry with us.

When *Achan* had ſinned, and God ſhewed a manifeſt Token of His Diſpleaſure, *Joſhua* and the *Elders* fell to Faſting and Prayer: But God ſays to *Joſhua, Wherefore lyeſt thou upon thy Face?* Iſrael *hath ſinned, and therefore* Iſrael *could not ſtand before their Enemies, neither will I with you any more, except ye deſtroy the accurſed thing from amongſt you. Nullus hic deprecandi locus, neq; niſi pœna ſontis expiari poteſt populus*, ſays *Grotius* on the Words, The Way to turn away my Wrath, and engage my Preſence

Preſence amongſt you, is not by unactive Supplication, but by finding out, and puniſhing the Offender.

To draw to a Concluſion; It cannot but be a melancholy Thought to reflect upon the many Abominations, which (of late eſpecially) have like a Leproſie, overſpread the whole Body of this Nation: Many of them Sins of the deepeſt Dye, ſuch as carry in them the higheſt Contempt of the God that made us, and ſtrike immediately at the Glory of the Divine Majeſty. Witneſs that Atheiſm, that Prophane Scoffing at God and Religion; that rending and tearing of His Name, by Curſing and Swearing; that Prophanation of the Day conſecrated to his Worſhip and Service. In ſhort, that Lewdneſs, Licentiouſneſs and Debauchery, which abounds amongſt us, to the great Diſhonour of God, the Reproach of Chriſtianity, and the Grief of all good Men. The wiſe Man ſays, *That one Sinner deſtroyeth much Good*, Eccleſ. 9. 18. and in the Inſtance in the *Text*, and divers others, we have ſeen, *how great a matter a ſmall Fire kindleth.* And if for one Sin of *Achan*, God puniſhed the whole Body of the *Iſraelites*, can we think we ſhall not awaken his Vengeance, whoſe Tranſgreſſions *have filled the Land from one Corner thereof to another?* *Achan* ſinn'd with ſome Modeſty, he concealed his Sacrilegious Theft; but we

ſin without Shame, or Bluſhing; without either Fear of God, or Reverence of Man; with that open Inſolence, as if we meant to defie Heaven, and dare him to puniſh us. *Jeruſalem is ruined*, Judah *is fallen*, (ſaith the Prophet) . *becauſe their Tongues and their Doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the Eyes of his Glory. The Shew of their Countenance doth witneſs againſt them, they declare their Sin as* Sodom, *they hide it not; wo unto their Soul, for they have rewarded Evil unto themſelves*, Iſa. 3. 8, 9. What Reaſon then have we of this Nation, to admire the Goodneſs and Forbearance of Almighty God; that he has not, long ago, laid waſte our *Jeruſalem?* We have hitherto taſted but lightly of that Cup, which of late, he put into the Hands of the Nations round about us. That Cloud, which fell with ſo much Fury and Violence, in Showers of Blood on our Neighbouring Nations, *Ireland*, *Scotland*, *Flanders*, *Savoy*, *Germany* and *Hungary*, hovered long about us; and we had great Reaſon to fear the breaking of it over our own Heads; and that we only felt ſome few Drops of it, we ought thankfully to aſcribe to that wonderful and diſtinguiſhing Providence of God; who, as the Prophet *Amos* ſays, Ch. 4. 7. *Cauſeth it to rain upon one City, and cauſeth it not to rain upon another City.* God has hitherto *encompaſſed us with his*

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Favour as with a Sheild, given a Gracious Anſwer to our Prayers and Faſting, by the Bleſſing of a Long-deſired and Honourable Peace. And now as *Ezra* ſays, Chap. 9. 13, 14. *Seeing that thou our God has puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve, and haſt given us ſuch a Deliverance as this; ſhould we again break thy Commandments, and join with the People of theſe Abominations, would'ſt not thou be angry with us, till thou hadſt conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no Remnant nor Eſcaping?* God forbid that we ſhould be ſo injurious to our ſelves, or ungrateful to him, as to make him ſuch unkind Returns. *Will ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh People and unwiſe? Is this thy Kindneſs to thy Friend?* Rather let us enquire with *David*, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all the Benefits that he hath done unto me?* It was a Grateful Return that he made, when God had given him Reſt from all his Enemies round about, he applied his Thoughts to do ſomething for the Advancement of the Glory of his great Benefactor, to build a Temple for his Worſhip.

And how can we better teſtifie our Thankfulneſs to Almighty God? What can we do that will be more acceptable to him, than to make Men the Temples for the Holy Spirit to dwell in; to root out from amongſt us, as much as poſſible, that *Accurſed thing*

which his Soul hateth; that God may delight to dwell amongſt us, and do us Good?

And for this we want neither Authority nor Encouragement. God has been pleaſed to put it into the Hearts of our *Law-givers*, to revive and make more effectual thoſe good Laws againſt Immorality and Prophaneneſs, which had long lain languiſhing, by reaſon of that Diſſolution of Manners, which ſo much abounded, and received but too much Countenance, from thoſe who ſhould have given better Examples, in the former Reigns.

Our Gracious Soveraign, to whom the *Executive* Power belongs, has, in his Proclamation ſet forth for that Purpoſe, expreſs't his higheſt Reſentments of that Impiety, Prophaneneſs and Immorality, this Kingdom does ſo abound with, as a moſt ungrateful Return to the many Bleſſings and Deliverances God has vouchſafed us, as the greateſt Scandal to our Chriſtianity, a Diſhonour to a Chriſtian Government, and the great Danger of provoking God thereby, to withdraw His Mercy and Bleſſing from us; and inſtead thereof, to inflict heavy and ſevere Judgments upon the Kingdom. Has he not ſtrictly charged and commanded all His Judges, Mayors, Sheriffs, Juſtices of the Peace, and all other his Officers and Miniſters, both Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, and all other His Subjects whom it may concern, to be very Vigilant and Strict

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in the Diſcovery, and the effectual Proſecution and Puniſhment of all Perſons, who ſhall be guilty of exceſſive Drinking, Blaſphemy, Prophane Swearing and Curſing, Lewdneſs, Prophanation of the Lord's Day, or other Diſſolute, Immoral or Diſorderly Practices, as they will anſwer it to Almighty God, and upon Pain of his higheſt Diſpleaſure? Has he not declared his Royal Purpoſe and Reſolution (and requir'd all Perſons of Honour, or in place of Authority, to follow his Royal Example herein) to diſcountenance Men of Diſſolute and Debauched Lives, that they may be reduced to Shame and Contempt, and that the Diſpleaſure of good Men towards them may ſupply what the Laws (it may be) cannot prevent.

And if, after all this, ſo Religious a Deſign be not carry'd on with that Vigour and Zeal as becomes a Work of ſuch Importance, to the Glory of God, the Honour of our Religion, and the Good of the whole Nation in general; may not the *King* juſtly ſay, as *David* in another Caſe, *I and my Kingdom are guiltleſs before the Lord for ever?* And where muſt the Guilt of theſe crying Sins reſt, but upon the Heads of the *Achans*, and *Troublers of our Iſrael?* And upon theirs too, who in their reſpective Stations, (as far as by the Laws of God and the Nation they are impower'd and commanded)

do

do not *hinder*, but rather, by their *Countenance* and *Connivance*, cheriſh the Growth of them amongſt us.

'Tis granted, that having to do with ſuch a ſort of Men, you will be likely to meet with ſome Trouble in the doing your Duty. Wicked Men are impatient of any *Reſtraint* in their Licentiouſneſs, as it was with the *Roman* Emperor *Alexander*; He could neither endure his Soldiers *Inſolent Outrage*, nor they his *Regular Diſcipline*. But if it be a good Work you have in Hand, you ought to contemn the Favours, and the Frowns of Men, in reſpect of the diſcharging a good Conſcience, and the Service you may hereby do to God and the Nation.

The Magiſtrate, it may be, will be cenſured as over-forward and buſie: But is the Magiſtrate accounted needleſly buſie, for putting the Laws in Execution between Man and Man, where our Property is concerned? Is he not *Cuſtos utriuſq; tabulæ?* And are we more to regard the Offences committed againſt one another, than thoſe againſt the Majeſty of Heaven? Is it only a commendable Quality to be ſilent, remiſs, and careleſs in thoſe things, wherein the Honour of God, our Temporal and Eternal Happineſs are concern'd?

Hiſtorians tell us, that the Emperor *Pertinax* was a Perſon exceedingly beloved by his Subjects, that his Reign was to the general

neral Satisfaction of all, except the *Prætorian Soldiers*, who had been ſo abominably corrupted in the laſt Reign, that they could not ſuffer any Appearance of Vertue; and therefore ſoon began to hate him for his ſtrict Diſcipline and Regulations, his reſtraining their former Riots and Licentiouſneſs: And when many of them were tumultuouſly aſſembled in his Pallace, with a Deſign to Aſſaſſinate him, he reaſoned thus with them: And what, I pray you, is mine Offence? For maintaining the Laws? Why, it was the Charge you all impoſed on me. Are Laws too ſtrait? Surely, not to the Vertuous, who are a Law to themſelves. Are they needleſs? Why then were they made? And being made, Why ſhould they not be executed?

The ſame Apology will ſerve in your Caſe. Was it neceſſary theſe Penal Laws againſt Immorality and Prophaneneſs ſhould be made, or was it not? If neceſſary, they ſhould be made, why not equally neceſſary they ſhould be executed? For in the Executiononly lyes the Life of all Laws, without which they are but ſo many inſignificant Cyphers. To ſay there was no neceſſity for the making of them, would, at beſt, be but a very unbecoming Reflection on the Wiſdom of the Three Eſtates of this, and many former Reigns. But to let that paſs. If they are indeed unneceſſary, it muſt be either

either becauſe the Nation does not abound with ſuch Sins, as thoſe Laws intimate, (and would to God our Lives would once make them thus unneceſſary) or elſe, that there is no ſuch great Hurt and Danger, as is pretended, in that Prophaneneſs and Immorality they are intended to ſuppreſs: That it is pity Men ſhould receive any Diſturbance, in ſuch pretty innocent Diverſions, as Inſulting Almighty God, Ruining their own, and other Men's Souls; Undermining the very Foundations of our Publick Peace and Happineſs. This is like *Solomon*'s Madman, that *caſteth about Firebrands, Arrows and Death, and ſaith, Am I not in Sport?* And we, forſooth, muſt tamely look on, and in good Manners not diſoblige or diſturb them, whilſt, like *Sampſon*, they are making Sport, till they have pull'd down the Pillars of the Government, and buried both themſelves and us in the common Ruin. No, *Solomon* ſays, *A Whip for the Horſe, a Bridle for the Aſs; the Correction of the Stocks and a Rod for the Back of Fools.*

But ſtill, be the Laws never ſo good, the Magiſtrates never ſo willing, and ready to do their Duty, if they do not ſee and hear with more Eyes and Ears than their own, the Laws may ſtill languiſh for want of Execution; and moſt of the Diſorders, committed within the Verge of their Juriſdiction, eſcape unpuniſhed. Had

Had one part of the Army been as *eaſie* and *unconcerned* as Men are generally now-a-days; the other as wicked as *Achan*, Hundreds of them (as well as he) might have committed Sacriledge, and *Joſhua* have known nothing of the Matter. There muſt, of neceſſity, be ſome to *ſtand up with them in the Judgment, and to take their part againſt the evil Doers.* Few ſo daringly wicked, as in a Helliſh Bravery to affront a Conſcientious Miniſter of Juſtice to his Face; or if they have ſpent their little Stock of *Conſcience*, that are ſo laviſh of their *Money*, as to come to ſwear out a Guinea before a Magiſtrate.

The Direction of the Laws to them (in this, as in other Caſes) is to proceed upon *Information*, as well as *Knowledge.* But this is that *frightful* Word (a Word indeed, but nothing elſe) which ſo many boggle at; to inform againſt their Neighbours (they think) would be the way to make themſelves Infamous. But do the *Laws* indeed direct any Man the doing of that which muſt derive a deſerved Infamy upon him? If it be every Man's Duty, to do all he can in a legal way towards the ſuppreſſing of Vice; if this cannot be done effectually without the Interpoſition of the Magiſtrate; if he cannot proceed (or but very rarely) but upon Information; if the Laws ſuppoſe ſuch Information ſhould be given, and direct him

to take it; if the Informers do nothing in this, contrary to the Laws of God, or the Nation, but what is very agreeable to, and receives *Countenance* and *Encouragement* from both, and in the whole manage themſelves with that Diſcretion, and Chriſtian Prudence, as in ſuch a Caſe they ought; I ſee no Reaſon, why they ſhould incur any Man's Cenſure, (except theirs who are impatient of any Reſtraint, and whoſe Licentious Lives make them obnoxious to the Laws) nay, why every good Man ſhould not be Ambitious of being, if poſſible, the happy Inſtrument of *converting*, if but one *Sinner, from the Evil of his Ways, and ſaving a Soul from Death.*

And if it be a good Work, I think no little Cavils about a Word ſhould deter any Man from it. Is there *Odium* in the Name? Time was when there was much more, in a far better: When it was thought blot enough upon a Man's Reputation, to ſay he was a Chriſtian. But Wo to that Man that is aſham'd of *Chriſt*, or doing any thing that may promote his *Honour* and *Service* in the World, whatever infamous Title he may be branded with for ſo doing. But is there indeed any Infamy in the thing, any more than for a Miniſter, a Church-warden, or a Conſtable, to preſent a Diſorderly Perſon in his Pariſh, to the *Ordinary*, or a *Juſtice of the Peace*; unleſs the calling the ſame thing by

by another Name has made it ſo? There is no lying at catch for the Penalty in the one, more than the other; and we hope no ſerving of their Paſſions in either, but the only aim in all of them is, (or at leaſt ſhould be) to deliver their Brethren from *Sin*, and themſelves and the Nation from the *Guilt* and *Puniſhment* of it.

I ſhall cloſe with the Words of the Reverend Dr. *Sanderſon*: Since not only our Father's Sins, and our own, but our Neighbour's Sins too, may bring Judgments upon us, and enwrap us in their Puniſhments; it ſhould teach every one of us to ſeek his own private in the common and publick Good, and to endeavour, if but for our *own* Security from Puniſhment, to awaken *others* from their Security in Sin.——One *Achan*, if but ſuffer'd, is able to undo the whole Hoſt of *Iſrael*, what Miſchief might he do, if countenanced, if allowed?—— Thou that haſt Power over others, ſuffer no Sin in them by baſe *Connivance*, but *puniſh* it; thou that haſt *Charge* of others, ſuffer no Sin in them by dull *Silence*, but *rebuke* it; thou that haſt nothing elſe, yet by thy Charitable *Prayers* for them, and by thy conſtant Example to them, ſtop the Courſe of Sin in others, further the Growth of Grace in others, labour by all Means (as much as in thee lyeth) to draw *others* unto God; leſt *their*

Sins

Sins draw God's Judgments upon themſelves and thee.

This that thou may'ſt do, and that I may do, and that every one of us that feareth God, and wiſheth well to the *Iſrael* of God, may do faithfully and diſcreetly in our ſeveral Stations and Callings, let us humbly beſeech the Lord, the God of all Grace and Wiſdom, for His Son Jeſus ſake, by His Holy Spirit to enable us. *Amen.*

FINIS.